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## Viewing cable 06BOGOTA4983, FARC/ELN: TERRORIST TAKEDOWNS REFLECT USG-GOC

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### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#06BOGOTA4983**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">06BOGOTA4983</a>	<a href="#">2006-06-05 15:53</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">SECRET</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Bogota</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.elespectador.com/wikileaks>

VZCZCXYZ0019  
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBO #4983/01 1561553  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
R 051553Z JUN 06  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5629  
INFO RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 7781  
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ JUN LIMA 3846  
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 9200  
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 4484  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP ADMIN/CHAIRS//  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

S E C R E T BOGOTA 004983

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/24/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [CO](#)

SUBJECT: FARC/ELN: TERRORIST TAKEDOWNS REFLECT USG-GOC  
INTEL COOPERATION

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Summary  
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¶1. (S) The GOC captured or killed 29 key midlevel operatives of the country's main guerilla insurgencies, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN), from September 2005 through April 2006. Takedowns were concentrated among three groups -- front commanders, finance officers, and explosives experts -- who are vital to guerilla activities and difficult to replace. The operations were guided by intelligence packages assembled with heavy USG support. Continued cooperation between USG and GOC intelligence units aims to chip away at the guerillas' middle management, as one element in a concerted set of strategies to weaken these organizations over time. End Summary.

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29 Key Operatives Netted  
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¶2. (S) A review of 29 takedowns of key FARC and ELN operatives from September 2005 through April 2006 gives a flavor of the impact of U.S. intelligence assistance in the GOC's fight against the two guerilla insurgencies. The operations in question were guided by joint USG and GOC intelligence work and executed by GOC security entities of the armed forces (COLAR and COLNAV), police (Dijin and DIPOL), and DAS (FBI equivalent). The strategic targets comprising 18 members of the FARC and 11 of the ELN included:

- two members of the ELN's National Directorate (DINAL), including the leader of a special commando unit orchestrating kidnappings;
- three front commanders and two deputy front commanders of the FARC;
- four commanders and three deputy commanders of the ELN;
- four financial officers (three FARC and one ELN);
- five FARC explosives experts; and
- two urban militia leaders, one from each insurgent group.

¶3. (S) Of these, five were killed in combat during capture attempts and 24 were taken alive. The latter are potentially valuable sources of further intelligence for future operations. Since targets are usually accompanied by protective details, there is a multiplier effect of roughly 5x on headcount totals. Because these operations were guided primarily by leads from human sources, most of the 29 were nabbed in populous areas in Cundinamarca and Antioquia departments or along the Caribbean coast, where sources can operate undetected and GOC law enforcement has greater leverage. These operations are thus distinct from those aimed at HVTs in the jungle, which are typically guided by signal or image intelligence and executed by military ambush in remote areas of guerilla control.

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Impact on FARC & ELN  
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¶4. (S) About half of those netted were front commanders. These are vital links in the chain of command, implementing instructions from top echelons to individual fronts and controlling regional and tactical operations. Ideologically, too, front leaders are vital bridges to inculcate the troops. Front commanders often represent campaign experience of 15

years or more. Analysts claim guerilla groups are feeling the pinch at this upper middle level due to battle casualties and shorter tenures within the ranks of possible replacements one level down.

¶15. (S) Finance officers make up another valuable set of targets. They act as intermediaries in the coca trade,

establish front companies, launder money, and procure weapons from across borders. This group is a highly trusted elite, with authority over cash and arms and trusted business contacts. Further, they often are caught carrying coordinates of caches of money and arms. In deep terrain they are specially protected, but their town visits to conduct transactions make them vulnerable to capture in urban operations.

¶16. (S) Losses of explosives experts, too, are very tough on the guerillas. Master bomb makers take a long time to groom, with high casualty rates as an occupational hazard; they are difficult to replace. Explosives are a FARC weapon of choice. Bomb specialists are often nabbed in towns in the process of preparing specific actions; hence their takedowns may have the most immediate impact of averting imminent attacks. Finally, captures of militia leaders help to preempt the guerillas' progress in urban areas where historically they have had little traction but where they are aspiring to expand networks.

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U.S. - Colombian Cooperation  
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¶17. (S) The USG has worked closely with GOC intelligence units in capacity building, and the two sides continue to cooperate in planning specific operations. Of the 29 cases discussed above, about 30% were carried out by the GOC independently, while 70% were conducted with USG assistance. Typically GOC entities in the field collect raw data, filtered and prioritized by the USG into operational packages, which the GOC in turn executes. This cooperation has yielded a quantum increase in the volume of actions undertaken, as well as higher-quality vetting of prospective actions and tighter operational planning. The main drawback is a perceived GOC dependency on U.S. support, no longer in terms of skills but rather in motivational drive and sense of urgency, which still derives from U.S. pushing. The appointment of Camilo Ospina as Minister of Defense earlier this year has been a positive development in this regard: he is a strong supporter of intelligence work and a catalyst for increasing the volume of intel-guided activity.

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